



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION

**Request for Determination of Insignificance  
Under the Interbasin Transfer Act  
MGL Chapter 21 Section 8b-8d**

**Southbridge Water Service Extension**

**WRC DECISION  
July 11, 1994**

On July 11, 1994, the Massachusetts Water Resources Commission (WRC) voted that the town of Southbridge's proposal to transfer water from its sources in the Quinebaug River Basin to the Timber Valley subdivision and the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MTA) Service Area 6W, in the French River basin, was **insignificant** under the Interbasin Transfer Act (M.G.L. Chapter 21 ss. 8B-8D).

**Background**

In June 1993, MTA filed an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) with MEPA for a project which proposed to provide water from the Town of Southbridge to two Turnpike service plazas (Service Areas 5E and 6W), a State Police Barracks, and approximately twelve homes in a nearby residential development, all in the Town of Charlton. The ENF stated that private wells used at these sites have been unable to produce the quality and quantity of water required.

The Town of Southbridge has sources in the Quinebaug River basin. Charlton, which has no central water supply, has land area in both the Quinebaug and French River Basins. The Interbasin Transfer Act applies only to proposed water supply connections to the subdivision and Service Area 6W, which are located in the French River Basin. Service Area 5E and the State Police barracks are located in the Quinebaug River Basin.

On April 20, 1994, the WRC received a request for determination of insignificance under the Interbasin Transfer Act from the Town of Southbridge for the portions of this project subject to the Act: extension of water service to the Massachusetts Turnpike Service Area 6W and the Timber Valley subdivision in Charlton, in the French River basin. The water main will have the capacity to transfer 200,000 gallons per day (gpd) of water out of basin, although average daily transfer will be approximately 55,000 gallons per day.

As required by 313 CMR 4.04(b), notice of receipt of the request was filed with the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act unit (MEPA). This notice was published in the Environmental Monitor on May 10, 1994. Copies of the notice were sent to affected communities. No pertinent comments were received in connection with the notice.

On June 13, 1994, the WRC discussed the proposal and the staff recommendation that the project be deemed as insignificant under the Act.

On July 11, 1994, **the Water Resources Commission voted to find this proposal to be insignificant** under the Interbasin Transfer Act. This decision was made after review and evaluation of the facts against the criteria set forth in the regulations. A synopsis of this evaluation follows.

### **Staff Analysis**

Southbridge's Request for a Determination of Insignificance was reviewed by staff from the Department of Environmental Management, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, the Division of Marine Fisheries, and the Riverways Program.

A hydrologic analysis of the proposed transfer shows that at capacity, 200,000 gpd, this transfer will result in a maximum reduction of 2.42% in average monthly flow. It is expected that when this transfer is used under average daily conditions of approximately 50,000 gpd, the flow reduction will be considerably less.

The Interbasin Transfer Act regulations stipulate the criteria which the WRC shall consider in determining if a proposed action is insignificant. Southbridge's application meets all the applicable criteria in 313 CMR 4.04(4), described on the following page.

**Request for Determination of Insignificance**  
**Town of Southbridge**  
**Proposal to Extend Service to Mass Pike Service Area 6W and the Timber Valley Subdivision**

Criteria for Determining Insignificance	Proposal Meets?	Explanation
(a) Is in no case over 1 mgd	Yes	Capacity of structure is 0.20 mgd. Average annual withdrawal will be 0.055 mgd
(b) Is less than 1 mgd on an annualized basis and is temporary, of a short duration and for a purpose other than water supply	Not Applicable	Proposal is long-term, for water supply
(c) Additional flow withdrawn is less than 5% of the instantaneous flow	Yes	The average annual daily flow reduction from the Quinebaug River is 0.27%, with a daily range of 0.55% to 3.56% during low flow conditions; The average monthly flow reduction will range from 0.39% to 2.42%*
(d) The 95% exceedance flow will not be diminished	Yes	This project will not measurably diminish the 95% exceedance flow on an average annual basis
(e) Special resource values will not be adversely affected	Yes	According to NHP and DEM staff, special resource values listed under 313 CMR 4.04(4)(e) will not be affected by this transfer
(f) The Commission shall consider the cumulative impacts of all past authorized or proposed transfers	Yes	There are no other authorized or proposed interbasin transfers from the Quinebaug River basin

\* based on a maximum withdrawal of 0.20 mgd

